

## *The proper attitude and challenges of learning methods to recover Albanian Education*

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### **Abstract**

The intention of this paper is to assess the established methods of teaching in Albania and give a figure of the techniques used in direct relation with the well-known positive or negative sides in a given time period. Mainly teaching contains two major components: distributing and getting information. This study aims to explore the success and problems of the whole teaching and learning process by testing methods and come out with new alternatives. The result of the research specifies that activities which consist of teaching strategies and classroom management helped promote interaction and motivation for learning even in a large class. More specifically this project focuses on techniques to improve student engagement and increase the classroom learning activities.

Key terms: Albanian Education, Methods of education, Problems in Albanian Education

JEL classification: I21, I23, I24

### **Introduction**

The education is significant for a country as it states enhancement and prosperity. In this case Albania, as a new representative for EU membership, has many evolutions to build in order to attain the EU's education standard. The education progress is carried by government and economic improvement, this small country is still facing major problems in the particular sectors. Albania has a per capita GNP of \$5,316 USD (PPP) according to INSTAT, which is the lowest in South-eastern Europe and among the lowest in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS). Its annual growth rate has drifted around 5.2% since 1990. Albania's economy keeps on growing; its total government spending is the lowest compared with the Southeastern Europe. The average standard of living is between the lowest in the region, with 25.4% of the population living below the national poverty line and 50% of the population living on less than \$4.00 USD a day. The unemployment rate - 15% - is similar variety with the poorest countries. On the other hand the literacy rate in Albania, age 9 or older, is about 99%. In this country the elementary education is compulsory (grades 1-9), but the results of the statistical institution present another situation where an important number

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of students give up their education in the second stage. Students must pass graduation exams at the end of the 9th grade and at the end of the 12th grade in order to continue their university education.

The majorities of the schools are public and financed by the government, but lately a number of private schools of various levels have been opened which improved the level of the graduates especially. There are 5000 schools all over the country. The academic year is separated into two semesters. A normal week begins on Monday and ends on Friday. Depending on the academic level, the universities start their lessons in mid-September or October and finishes around June or July. There is also winter break which includes two weeks.

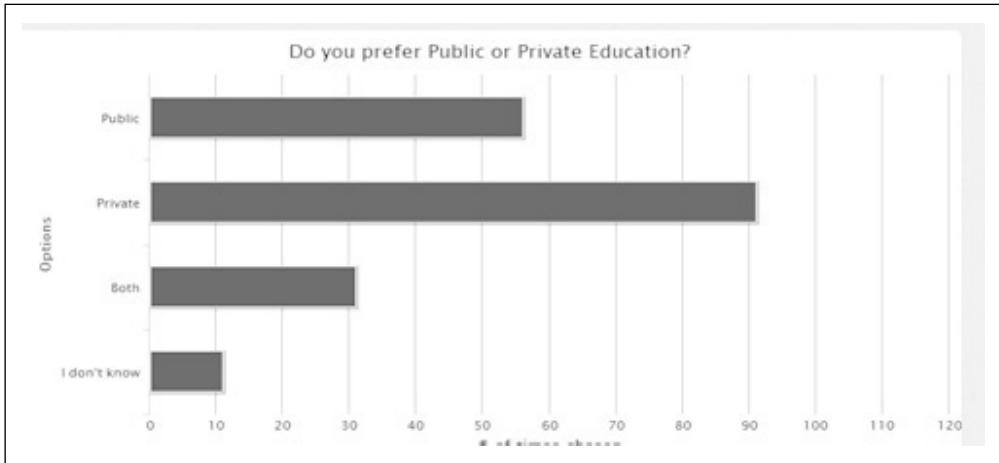
The main focus for this paper is on participation, equity, and quality; the financial side and the support given by government institutions or private ones. It underlines the university education because in this level we must give directions towards the future generation work force. Another issue is interconnected with the children from poor families, rural families, and maybe families living in cities have lower conscription than children of non-poor families and urban families. There are many problems still taking place in gender classifications. The problems usually generate from the country's infrastructure which makes the majority of the females remain illiterate. Many schools in the rural areas are closed each year because of the missing of the main material to receive a normal lesson. This paper focuses on the education frameworks, by showing statistical tables and figures. The tertiary level fluctuates significantly with university education on issues such as student's participation issues, improvement in the education sector, and other special treatment.

Student's contribution during the classes has however increased as an important input to changing class-room and school atmosphere coming from the lectures friendly attitudes. The Ministry of Education has required new knowledge and skills for the teachers which improved for sure the quality of the education in the targeted schools. The new reforms and restrictions made the students more actively participating in the learning process. Another concern is related with the communication interaction between teacher and student which came as a result from the new specialists trained in the education sector

## **Education in Albania**

A reorganization plan was announced in 1990 that would extend the compulsory education program from eight to ten years. The following year, however, a major economic and political crisis in Albania, and the ensuing breakdown of public order, plunged the school system into chaos. Widespread vandalism and extreme shortages of textbooks and supplies had a devastating effect on school operations, prompting Italy and other countries to provide material assistance. The minister of education reported in September 1991 that nearly one-third of the 2,500 schools below the university level had been ransacked and fifteen school buildings razed. Many teachers relocated from rural to urban areas, leaving village schools understaffed and swelling the ranks of the unemployed in the cities and towns; about 2,000 teachers fled the country. The highly structured and controlled educational environment that the communist regime had painstakingly cultivated in the course of more than forty-six years was abruptly shattered and had to be rebuilt.

As during Communism, teacher discipline remains a major problem in the Albanian education system as teachers resort to violence while students are expected to simply memorize the assigned material. However, there has been an effort to adopt the Western model whereby the student is at the center of the education system as opposed to the current Eastern model where the teacher holds the dominant role

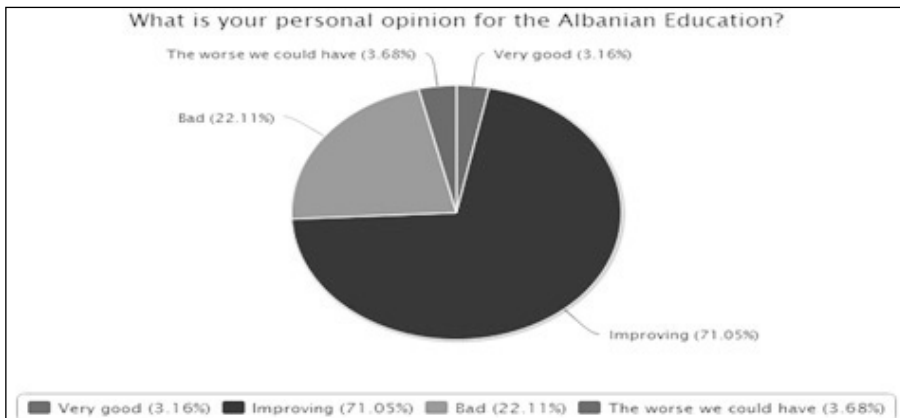


In the late 1990s, many schools were rebuilt or reconstructed to improve learning conditions. Most of the improvements have happened in the larger cities, such as the capital Tirana which suffers from vast overcrowding of classrooms. The old communist propaganda has been taken out of all school curricula and more emphasis has been put on mathematics, sciences and humanities. The school week was shortened from 6 to a 5 day one. Some of the wealthier schools have begun introducing computers, but many schools still lack basic supplies for laboratory classes. Changes have also happened in the universities level. Despite the public universities a number of private universities have been established in different cities of Albania, offering students possibilities of studying in different branches. E-learning programs have begun to be introduced, offering students the possibility of following online courses. The Albanian literacy rate hovers at around 99% and efforts are ongoing to maintain this. Although education is only compulsory for the first 9 grades, most young people stay on through to grade 12. The academic year, divided into two semesters begins in September / October and ends in June / July. Primary education lasts for 9 years following a non-mandatory period spent at preschool. Secondary education known as regular takes a further three years to complete. The focus is on academic teaching and preparation for university. Many schools have recently been rebuilt and are being equipped with modern technologies. Vocational education, which is an alternative to regular school, takes between 2 to 5 years depending on whether a simple diploma or a full trade qualification is desired. Considerable effort by the state in this direction is adding muscle to a growing economy. There are a significant number of universities in Albania both public and private, and these are well dispersed in the major cities. The University of Tirana was the first when founded in 1957, and today has a student population approaching 15,000 and a teaching staff of nearly 900. Its faculties include economic sciences, foreign languages, history & philology, medicine, natural sciences, law, social sciences, and physical education, and its international reputation is growing.

Many authors have found that students prefer active learning and that it promotes deeper understanding of course material and increased logical thinking skills (McConnell et al, 2003). Students have also expressed a strong interest in applying their classroom knowledge and active learning allows them to achieve this (Jakubowski 2003). Indeed others contend that „students must experience the class material and make it part of

themselves and that this does not occur „when students simply listen to lectures, memorize information and take objective exams“ (Gremler et al. 2000). While many authors discuss in-class activities as forms of active learning one ubiquitous method in business education is class participation. Class participation can include in-class activities and in-class discussion. Dallimore et al. (2006) reemphasizes that classroom discussion is the most frequently used and more often embraced “active learning” strategy, and that it helps develop critical understanding, self-awareness, and appreciation for diverse perspectives and prepares them to take action in the world. It is seen as a strategy which provides students an opportunity to be actively involved and to learn from the involvement of other students.

Other authors concentrate on the fact that the passive student is the greatest challenge facing educators and finding ways to engage them is vital to teaching and learning success (Cohen 1991). It is clear from the literature that consensus is on the fact that actively participating in the learning process allows students to learn more (Weaver and Qi 2005). Additionally student-centered classrooms have been shown to increase motivation (Girgin and Stevens 2005). Additionally class participation allows students to increase their knowledge and more importantly apply it contextually (Jones 2008). Cohen fervently believes that we have obligations as educators to bring the class to life and in addition to being solidly grounded in our subject area we must create an environment which encourages and rewards participation, “class participation provides a means of creating a chemistry that brings teaching alive and gives life to the classroom”. However while it is clear that most researchers and educators see the value of active participation in achieving improved learning outcomes for students, the difficulty seems to lie in eliciting the participation of students (Weaver and Qi 2005). Using it as an assessment tool and rewarding students by way of marks seems to be the only way forward. Dancer and Kamvounias (2005) stress that “assessing class participation encourages students to develop their oral communications skills and to demonstrate other skills such as interacting and cooperating with their peers and their tutor.”It is felt that class participation only really works if it is graded (Girgin & Stevens 2005). It is also a well-held belief that students’ participation helps a class run much more smoothly only if it is undertaken willingly and enthusiastically (Petris 2006). We all know that nothing motivates a student more than a grade.



## **Implementation of Slip System**

Given that class participation needs to be graded to be effective the issue is often with measuring participation. How can we increase the quantity and quality of class participation to improve learning outcomes for all students and at the same time ensure that students are being rewarded adequately for their participation? We decided to implement a slip system in order to gauge the levels of participation for students. The slip of paper contained student's name and a small photo. Slips were given to students when they participated in class discussions and then collected at the end of class. A count of the slips allowed the lecturer to record participation levels. While this is not a new idea and other authors have discussed ways of increasing participation we were unable to find any research that study this concept from a student perspective. So while we felt student participation increased, we decided to undertake a study to get students reactions to class participation in general and secondly our attempt to increase participation.

## **Methodology**

To test students' views of class discussions, their level of participation and the effectiveness of class participation slips a questionnaire was developed. At the end of semester, students were asked to fill in the questionnaire, which was completely voluntary.

The sample as shown in Table 1 below consists of 55 students representing a 100% response rate. Females outweigh the males (38/17). All students are enrolled in postgraduate studies of whom most students study full-time and 53% are international students coming from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB).

A range of existing scales relating to class participation were refined for use in the questionnaire.

Additionally we included questions on the causes of non-participation which include; Shyness, Lack of confidence, Large class size, Not prepared, Dominant students and Fear of having the wrong answer (Rocca 2010). An information processing confidence scale (Wright 1975) was also included in the questionnaire; the validity and reliability of Wright's scale have been demonstrated over the years (Bearden, Hardesty & Rose 2001). The inclusion of this scale was to examine the impact of information processing confidence on students' views and perceptions of class participations. A 5-point Likert like scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" was used; students were asked to indicate their level of agreement for each item.

## **Results**

In analyzing the data, we firstly considered the individual items (See Table 2). The majority of students is familiar with class discussions, like them and feels comfortable (items 1, 2 and 6). They are generally satisfied with their participation (item 3: mean = 3.09), but report increased preparation for class when expected to participate (item 4: mean = 3.42) and feel that they learn more when participating in class discussions (item 7: mean = 3.53). Whether students participate in class discussions is not necessarily influenced by their level of preparation but rather by class size, lecture format and their level of confidence (items 8 – 11). Students reported little interactions with lecturers apart from email exchange, but felt that the lecturers level of authority and their role would influence their learning process (item 17: mean = 3.28). They expressed that they are not too concerned with disapproval, embarrassment and criticism in class (items 19 & 20). Items

21 to 23 suggest that students don't make an extra effort to achieve better grades. Though students saw clear benefits in using participation slips (items 25, 27 & 28) at the same time they found them unnecessary (item 26). When considering the moderating variables (see Tables 2 and 3), gender didn't show any significant differences except for item 10 that indicates that female students put more effort into class preparation. However, there are significant differences when considering whether students come from a different cultural background with Non-English Speaking Background (NESB). International students expressed a greater liking for class discussions (item 2; they felt more comfortable in class discussions and participated more frequently (items 5 & 6). They didn't feel that their level of confidence or fear of disapproval would impact on their level of participation (items 11 & 19) and displayed a greater level of interaction with lecturers (items 14, 16 & 22). A greater level of academic confidence impacted on how familiar students were with class discussions and whether they felt more comfortable in class discussions (items 1 & 6). More confident students showed a greater interest in interacting with lecturers (item 12) and displayed less concerns to question lecturers or fear to be embarrassed or criticized (items 18 – 20). They expressed that they didn't need participation slips to participate in class discussions.

In addition to these quantitative findings we also allowed space for written feedback and the results were mixed with some students hating the slips and others thinking it was a great idea, a sample of comments follows; “feels like junior school, didn't encourage me to participate” “they did increase participation, but often just in quantity not quality” “too focused on quantity, students just trying to accumulate points” “without such a device to encourage the traditionally quiet students to speak we would lose out on the benefit of their ideas, opinions and knowledge”

## **Conclusions**

Our findings support much of the literature on class participation, grading students does increase participation and it clearly only works to motivate them when graded. Although our findings did find that students found the slips an unnecessary aid, maybe by attaching more importance to them, this could be changed. This could be done in line with the debate on quality versus quantity of participation and as a result we are considering a color-coded system dependent on the quality of the comment. This is something we will clearly investigate in the near future. Something we did not investigate but has clearly been evidenced by increased student participation is that that progressively releasing mark throughout the semester encourages greater participation.

Dancer & Kamvounias (2005) also found that progressively releasing marks (rather than telling them at the end of semester) motivated them to participate once they realized that they were doing so badly. This is something we will investigate in our next study. A very surprising finding was the NESB students, in previous studies we have undertaken NESB students had been found to lack confidence and not like talking in front of classmates (Stegemann and Sutton-Brady 2009) our results in this study are contrary to this and we feel this is something we must investigate further. In line with previous studies females prepare more although there are no other discernable differences in gender. On the whole not surprisingly self-confidence leads to greater participation and no fear of disapproval of others. This research while at an early stage makes an interesting contribution to the literature on class participation especially by providing concrete results on the effectiveness

of the slip system and students' attitudes to class participation.

Significance of the study

The outcomes of the present study may be useful for the following:

- The present project is the first study in Georgian reality, which gives an overview of existence of verbal abuse by the teacher towards children in Tbilisi public schools and its connection to school related outcomes.
- The outcomes of the study may be used by educational stakeholders in planning and running trainings for school personnel.
- The policy makers may use the findings of the study while planning school related policy documents and regulations, to improve quality of education and implement the child centered approach in Georgian school setting.

The first level – respond to requirements – is when student participation is mostly expressed by following teachers and class demands. Learners attend the class, attend to teachers, respond to directions or questions posed by the teacher (ibid). All these participatory behaviors occur in the primary grades and remain essential throughout the school years (Finn 1993). Students, who fail to meet these basic requirements of classroom, are likely to experience immediate learning difficulties as well as more severe behavior problems in later years (Finn and Rock 1995).

The second level participation – initiative taking - is when students increase his independence in class. It means that the student not only completes class rules, but takes initiation in learning process and invests a lot in his own education. In other words, the student tries to get information on his own and extend his knowledge. For this purpose he poses questions in class, initiates dialogue with the teacher before, during or after classes, display enthusiasm by doing more class work or homework than is required, is persistent when confronted to academic difficulties and the like.

The third and fourth levels involve participation in school-related activities like athletics or school governance. These two levels of participation, since they concern out of class participation are not the interest of our study.

## **Student classroom participation related to gender**

Students' gender was one of the background information for this project. It is interesting to investigate whether there is any connection between child's class participation and gender. This kind of relationship was explored by several studies.

Voelkl (1997) investigated the antecedents of students' identification with school. Namely, he explored on longitudinal pattern of academic achievement and classroom participation among 1335 African – American and white students. Findings showed, classroom participation and academic achievement were significant predictors of identification of white female students (ibid).

Another study conducted to measure 4 graders participation in classroom activities showed correlation between gender and the level of participation. Particularly, female youngsters exhibited higher level of participation on average than males (Finn, 1991).

Both these researches were done in different cultural contexts; therefore it is interesting to discuss these findings in comparison with the present study outcomes in terms of data presentation and analytical part.

### **Student’s academic achievement**

In the present study academic achievement is not considered in its broad understanding, it is defined only as grades gained by a student on different school subjects. Grades were chosen as indicators since they offer a very concrete measurement of student performance. Moreover grading is the area that is directly influenced by the teacher’s attitude towards a student (Birch & Ladd 1997, Hamre & Pianta 2001). Therefore, “teacher’s’ grades rather than standardized test scores should be more related to student-teacher relationships as grades are more subjective and the student-teacher relationship may play a more important role in assigning grades process (DiLalla et al. 2004).

### **Student’s classroom participation and academic achievement**

Student’s classroom participation is positively related to improvement in academic achievement (Ladd, Bush & Seid 2000; Finn 1898; Finn 1991; Finn 1993). Participation in the early grades is related to school performance and behavior in the later years (Finn 1991, Valiente et al. 2008). Particularly, students in the primary grades can fail to participate in class activities due to lack of interest, inattentiveness or different kinds of learning problems. The student who finds difficult to study, memorize, respond to teachers’ questions or display other participatory behavior, is more likely to fail in academic achievement and gains low marks in different school subjects. Over the year students’ non participation or disengagement which is accompanied by low grades may evolve into problem behavior, like, truancy, dropping out of school etc. (Finn 1991). On the contrary, participation reflects an internal motivation and learning –goal orientation of the learner that directs ones behavior and effort towards classroom tasks and demands (Dweck 1989; Gottfried et al. 1994 cited in Valiente et al. 2008). Students, who are highly involved in class activities, are high in effortful control. Effortful control is student’s ability to regulate attention, delay gratification and be persistent when doing difficult academic tasks and the like. The student high in effortful control has high academic competence and is tend to gain high grades. This student is less likely to fail in school performance or display disruptive behavior in class.

Finn (1993) concludes that the connection between academic achievement and school engagement – as exhibited through attendance, classroom behavior and participation outside the regular program – is strong and consistent. Study conducted on different racial-ethnic groups (Asian or Pacific Islander; Hispanic, regardless of race; Black and White, not of Hispanic origin) showed a strong linear association of participation with academic achievement. That is, the higher the participation level is, the higher academic scores (average) are. These results remained unchanged when SES (Socio Economic Status) of the student’s family was controlled. Besides, it appeared that association of participation with academic achievement was equally characteristic of girls and boys and of all ethnical groups which participated in abovementioned study. That is, regardless the gender and race high level of participation appeared to be a strong determinant for high academic achievement in schools. These findings of Finn serve as a powerful argument for connection between student’s academic achievement and school participation.

To describe how academic achievement is regulated by student school participation Finn (1989) had developed Participation – Identification model (PI) of school engagement:

- PI model



To understand PI model several steps should be discussed:

(a) Participation in class activities leads a child to high academic achievement - In light of PI model, most children, as they enter the school, are willing to participate in class activities. That is, learners in the primary grades try to adhere to classroom rules and norms, attend to the teacher, respond her questions and requests and the like. Under favorable circumstances, the student who participates, is tend to be succeeded in academic performance (do academic tasks well and shows socially accepted behavior). Consequently, he is likely to be awarded with high grades. By favorable circumstances the following is meant: (1) The student is skilled enough to learn and respond to class demands. Children, who are cognitively mature, exhibit higher level of participation and academic achievement in class (Reynolds and Bezruczko 1993 cited in Ladd et al. 2000); (2) Instructions given in class should correspond to student's abilities (is not difficult to understand); (3) Teacher creates the class environment, that meets different needs of the learner.

(b) Students with high academic achievement are likely to develop a feeling of identification with school - A pupil, who often is rewarded for his effort to follow rules and participate in class, feels comfortable and is tend to develop positive affection towards the school. In other words, the student emerges to be not only behaviorally, but also emotionally engaged in school. As mentioned earlier, to be emotionally engaged means to have e feeling of identification with school (identification with school is regarded as emotional component of engagement, or emotional engagement, whilst participation is seen as behavioral engagement). Finn (1989) argues that "identification with school" consists of feeling of "belongingness" and "value". The first one primarily implies, that the student feels like a part of the school and as if the school is a part of the student. The second ("value") means that the student thinks, school is important to him and consequently he values school related activities and outcomes.

(c) Feeling of identification with school positively influences student class participation in turn - Not surprisingly, the Student with strong feeling of identification with school, who thinks that he belongs in school and values school activities is motivated to participate in class. This student is more tend than his peers to follow enthusiastically class rules; take initiative during the lesson, ask questions, seek information in encyclopedia etc.

Thus, as we can see, the developmental cycle is created, named as PI model. Within this cycle high level of student class participation accompanied with high academic achievement leads the student to the feeling of identification with school. The latter in turn influences student's class participation in a positive way.

The unrestricted movement of developmental cycle is crucial for the child to learn and develop. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that, children do not enter the school with already existed feeling of identification with school. However, they start as willing participants and the feeling of identification develops gradually as an outcome of high level of participation and high academic achievement linkage.

- LPA model

Ladd Bush and Said (2000) are critical to Finn who states that school participation accompanied by high grades brings about student's feeling of identification with school

(1989). They developed a model called “School liking – Participation - Academic Achievement” (LPA model). First of all it is important to underline, that the concept named as Identification by Finn is synonym with School liking by students in LPA model. It is so, because children who feel positively about school are tend to develop “ties” or “attachment” to school and emerge to be emotionally engaged in school activities. Attachment or emotional engagement represents Student’s identification with school (Voelkl 1997).

The LPA model was created on base of the study conducted by Ladd et al. (2000). The aim of this study was to assess to what extent students early sentiments towards school determine student’s classroom participation and academic achievement. School liking was viewed as one of several “entry” factors. “Entry factors” means that students develop emotional sentiments towards school (they like or dislike the school) early in kindergarten or in primary grades soon as they enter the grade school. It appeared that school liking along with other “entry” factors (family background, parents’ education, student’s preacademic preparation etc.) determines student’s willingness to participate in class activities. Students who like school are more tend to adhere class rules and demands and participate in class activities. High level of class participation itself leads the student to high academic achievement.

Thus, as it can be seen, the study by Ladd and colleagues (2000) found more support for the premises that children’s initial school liking fosters classroom participation and academic achievement. No support was found for the contention that early participation and academic achievement increases school liking or identification with school as it was described by Finn (1989). Thus, school liking is a cause rather than a consequences of early classroom participation. Moreover, the same study (by Ladd et al. 2000) found out, that the sentiments children develop early in the school year are likely to persist over time.

These findings of Ladd and colleagues (2000) is very important to take into account. If school liking in primary grades is significant determinant of student school participation and academic achievement over the school years, more effort should be taken in primary grades to evoke student’s positive feelings towards school. Yet very little is done to prepare children for school transition (ibid). In school where there are increased academic and other demands small children if they fail to meet such demands can easily get frustrated. These children probably are less likely to develop positive feelings towards school and consequently, are less motivated to participate in class.

The study by Ladd at al. (2000) is also interesting for our research, since, in spite of the fact that it criticizes the PI model by Finn (1989), it supports the premise (like PI model), that class participation is a strong determinant for student’s academic achievement.

### **Verbal abuse by the teacher**

In the past, most societies permitted physical punishment of children by teachers. There were no legal statements or scientific works for defining and preventing different forms of child abuse (Garbarino 1978). Since the middle of XX century issues related to the child protection from any kind of abuse have been brought up and regulations protecting children’s rights have been created (ibid). Consequently, the concept of child abuse has been discussed broadly.

Many scholars conceptualized abuse of children as a range of behaviors and conditions such as: (1) physical abuse - a form of abuse which causes feelings of pain,

injury, or other physical suffering. It may be expressed as striking, punching, slapping etc. towards the child (Crooks & Wolfe 2007), (2) child sexual abuse is a form of child abuse in which a child is abused for the sexual enjoyment of an adult or older adolescent (Hamarman & Bernet 2000) and (3) psychological (emotional) abuse that is most severe part of child abuse (Crooks & Wolfe 2007 ) because “it is not visible by physical injuries, however, persists long and destroys child’s normal development” (Shumba 2001, pg.784). Therefore, emotional abuse is not a way of mistreating the child by harming him/her physically (Glaser 2002). It is more about a child abuse by: isolating, terrorizing, over-pressuring, rejecting and abusing verbally (Hamarman & Bernet 2000, Crooks & Wolfe 2007). The priority of the present study is only verbal abuse out of forms of the psychological abuses listed above. Particularly, the study targets verbal abuse by a teacher towards children. This form of psychological abuse is considered by the scholars (Garbarino et al. 1986, Glaser 2002) as the most frequent form of abuses in the school education system ( Brendgen et al. 2007, Olweus 1996, cited in Brendeg et al 2006). For example Branam (1972) states in his research that teachers are involved more often than others (even parents) in personality conflicts with children and their humiliation in front of class.

Casarjian (2002) gives a general definition of the term verbal abuse by the teacher as: “teacher’s verbal attacks on the student’s character or ability” (Casarjian 2000, cited in Brendeg et al.2007, p.27). This definition by Casarjian (2002) is used in the present study, since it gives general understanding that “teacher’s verbal attacks” are influencing important parts of a child personality, like abilities and character. “Verbal attacks” are the ways of how verbal abuse is expressed. The present study groups frequently used “verbal attacks” under the following five categories of verbal abuse: “Verbal put downs and name calling” – under this dimension several scholars combine teasing, name-calling, or yelling at the child (Casarjian 2000, Garbarino et al. 1986). For example calling the child rude names like “damey”, “stupid” etc. “Threats” - implies inappropriate threats towards the child for trying to control his /her behavior. Like harassed a student to withdraw him/her from the class or school (Krugman& Krugman 1984, Shumba 2002). “Negative Predictions” - Is discussed as saying to child that he/she will never be successful in school or even in life ( Schaefer 1997). “Ridiculing and teasing” – Is argued to be sarcastic comments about child’s mistakes, and sometimes even on student’s appearance (Garbarino et al. 1986, Schaefer 1997). “Shaming and public criticizing” - Discussing child’s weak point in front of the class, comparing the one to other children and often criticizing him publicly (Schaefer 1997).

Each of the above mentioned negative verbal activities by a teacher pay an impact on “child’s character and ability” by depriving child’s self-esteem. This might cause impediments to the development of self-actualization tendencies in the class (Branam 1972) and barrier child’s proper functioning like hindrance pupil’s participation and exhibition of socially accepted behavior.

## **The connection between participation and problem behavior**

First of all it is important to mention, that participation is considered as behavioral component of students engagement in classroom/school activities and the absence of participatory behavior per se may be considered as problem behavior. Thus, Non participatory behaviors can be described as (a) failing to take advantage of constructive strategies for learning, or else (b) engaging in negative behaviors that impede learning. (Finn, 1993)

Over the years, a pattern of nonparticipation accompanied by low or failing grades can evolve into blatant problem behavior including truancy, dropping out of school, and even juvenile delinquency (Finn 1991).

Ladd, Bush and Said (2000) relate problem behavior by children to their basic dislike or mistrust of school. Children, who dislike school initially, may be less inclined to embrace the student class rules and norms. These children are less likely to develop a feeling of identification with school. Consequently, they do not act in a responsible manner in class and are more likely to avoid, resist, or withdraw from classroom rules, and responsibilities.

According to Bernstein and Rulo (cited in Finn, 1989) academic and learning problems are significant causes of problem behavior. History of low grades and academic failure accompanied by embarrassment and frustration leads to an “impaired self-view” by the student. Self-view is operationalized as general self-esteem - “personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds towards himself” (Coopersmith 1981, cited in Finn 1989, p. 134). An impaired self-view in turn may lead the youngster’s to the oppositional behavior. Oppositional behavior may take the form of disrupting the instructional process, skipping class, or even committing delinquent act or school dropout.

Overall, we have the picture of multiple connections between pupil’s classroom participation, academic achievement and problem behavior. Low level of participation may be caused by student’s initial dislike towards school. Nonparticipation in school/class related activities is associated with poor academic achievement. The history of low grades on the one hand impacts student’s self-view in a very negative way and might become a cause for problem behavior. On the other hand, (within PI model) the same grades are related to the feeling of identification with (“attachment” and “bonding” to) school by the student. Within the scopes of “social control theory (Hirschi 1969; Liska & Reed 1985, cited in Finn 1989) the connection between “bonding” and behavior is very important since the ties, links, bonds etc. to conventional institutions “function to control or inhibit the behavioral expression of deviant motivation” (Liska & Reed, 1985, cited in Finn 1989 p. 547). When these bonds are weakened, the individual is free to engage in deviant behavior (Finn 1993) or appears to be at risk of the emotional and physical withdrawal from school (Voelkl 1997). As a conclusion, participation can be related to problem behavior in two ways:

1. Participation is related to academic achievement, the latter is connected to self view. Low self view per se leads to problem behavior.
2. Participation is related to student’s school attachment, and loosing the ties to school also provokes misbehavior in children.

## **Academic achievement**

One of the gains of educational reforms in Georgia was establishing new assessment system in schools. Different from the old system of student evaluation in class which assessed mostly students’ abilities to memorize and do academic tasks correctly, the new system requires of teacher to base student assessment on observation in class. It means, not only academic tasks and tests performed by the students is evaluated, but also students’ abilities, to participate in group work, discussions, express ideas, listen to others while discussions and the like (National Curriculum& Assessment center, 2008).

10 score system is used for grading the student. The range from 1 to 5 is equal to academic achievement below average. Points 6-7 correspond to average, and points from 8 to 10 is equal to academic achievement above average.

One item investigated on student's overall academic achievement built by grades in different school subjects (above average, average, below average) in the present study. This item goes together with the "Problem behavior measurement scale". However, it is not a part of any subscale from this questionnaire but is discussed separately.

### **Data presentation and results**

The data in this chapter is presented in the following way: (i) background information about the sample; (ii) analysis of the items, which give interesting information to answer the research questions; (iii) analysis of subscales of each scale; (iv) overview of results of the three scales; and (v) connections between the target variables. Particularly, to what extent are related: (1) verbal abuse by the teacher and student classroom participation; (2) verbal abuse, problem behavior and academic achievement; and (3) participation, problem behavior an academic achievement